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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of sexual harassment among women employees in a university setting, in particular the extent to which women perceived that the strategies which they chose to handle situations of sexual harassment resulted in satisfaction with the outcome. Data were collected via an anonymous mail questionnaire at a mid-sized Midwestern public university. Incidence rates were similar to those reported at other universities. Common strategies used by all three groups of women in dealing with the situations were: (1) to ignore the behavior; (2) to avoid the individual; and (3) to confront the individual. Few women reported making formal complaints. Women who were more bothered by the incident were also more likely to report using an active strategy. Women who dealt with the situation by using avoidance or talking informally with a university official tended to be dissatisfied with the outcome. Stepwise regression analysis found that the extent to which women were bothered by the incident of harassment, feared retaliation, and felt that the incident interfered with their work, were significant predictors of the extent of their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the situation. Contains 22 references. (Author/JB)

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Sexual Harassment Experiences of University Employees: Actions Taken and Satisfaction with the Outcome

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Abstract

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of sexual harassment among women employees in a university setting. Since many women do not use formal complaint mechanisms, this study examined the extent to which women perceived that the strategies which they chose to handle situations of sexual harassment resulted in satisfaction with the outcome.

Information was collected via an anonymous mail questionnaire at a mid-sized Midwestern public university. For this study, only the responses of the women employees were analyzed. Incidence rates were similar to those reported at other universities. Forty-nine percent of the women faculty, 53% of the women administrators, and 33% of the classified women employees reported at least one occurrence of unwanted verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature. The most common behavior reported was "unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks or questions of a sexual nature." Reflecting the organizational setting, women in classified positions were most often harassed by a superior, administrative women were as likely to be harassed by a peer or colleague as by a superior, while faculty women were most likely to report being harassed by a peer. Women who were harassed by a superior were more concerned about the possibility of reprisals.

Common strategies used by all three groups of women in dealing with the situations were to ignore the behavior, to avoid the individual, and also to confront the individual. Very few women reported making formal complaints. Women who were very bothered by the incident were more likely to report using an active strategy such as confronting the harasser or making an informal complaint. Women who dealt with the situation by using avoidance or talking informally with a university official were more dissatisfied with the outcome than those who did not report using these strategies. Stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine predictors of satisfaction with the outcome of the most serious incident. The extent to which women were bothered by the incident of harassment, feared retaliation, and felt that the incident interfered with their work were significant predictors ($p<0.01$) of the extent of their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the situation.

As institutions address this pervasive problem, it is important to understand how women are actually dealing with the situations they experience as employees of the university. In this study satisfaction with the outcome was related to the perceived seriousness of the incident. Institutions need to focus particular attention on meeting the needs of women who are in situations where they fear retaliation. Safe, confidential reporting mechanisms need to be in place and well-publicized within the institution.

Introduction[1]

The Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings and the events at the Navy Tailhook convention brought national media attention to the issue of sexual harassment. However, long before this recent round of national publicity, colleges and universities had been working to address the issue of sexual harassment. Despite a variety of institutional efforts, sexual harassment remains a frequent and widespread problem in academe (Dziech & Weiner, 1984).

While many studies (Allen & Okawa, 1987; Benson & Thomson, 1982; Maihoff & Forrest, 1983; Malovich & Stake, 1990; McCormack, 1985; see Rubin & Borgers (1990) for a review; Schneider, 1987) have attempted to measure incidence rates and experiences of sexual harassment among students, fewer have focused on the experiences of academic employees (Brooks & Perot, 1991; Goodwin, Roscoe, Rose, & Repp, 1989; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; McKinney, 1990). Goodwin, Roscoe, Rose, & Repp (1989) reported that 39% of female employees at the Midwestern university they studied had experienced sexual harassment over their employment history at that institution. Brooks & Perot (1991) surveyed women faculty at a southeastern university concerning their experiences with a broad range of harassment behaviors. They found that 88.8% of the faculty women surveyed reported some form of gender harassment. McKinney (1990) focused on the experiences of faculty. She found that 20% of the women faculty reported being sexually harassed by a colleague and 22% reported being sexually harassed by a student. Often studies of the harassment of university employees focus only on the experiences of faculty or report the results across all categories of employees. Few studies examine the experiences of women university employees in different categories of university employment.

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[1]An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 21st annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, November 12, 1992, Knoxville, Tennessee.

As is true in workplace studies, women in academe infrequently make use of formal reporting mechanisms (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Allen & Okawa, 1987) and may be unaware of the existence of offices to handle such complaints (Markunas & Joyce-Brady, 1987). Women deal with sexual harassment through a number of strategies including avoidance, defusion, negotiation, and confrontation (Gruber, 1989). Most frequently, women attempt to deal with the situation by ignoring the harassment or avoiding the individual (Gruber & Bjorn, 1986; Reilly, Lott, & Gallogly, 1986; Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). How women choose to deal with a particular situation of harassment depends on a number of factors. These include such well established factors as the status or power of the harasser and whether or not the situation is recognized as one of harassment. Brooks & Perot (1991) found some support for a model in which perceived offensiveness predicted likelihood of reporting an incident of sexual harassment. Less is known about women's satisfaction with their attempts to deal with situations of sexual harassment.

This paper describes the results of a survey study of experiences of sexual harassment among women in a university setting. One purpose of this study was to further document the incidence of sexual harassment among university employees and to add to the literature on harassment by exploring differences in women's experiences by category of employment: faculty, administrative, or classified. In addition, this study explores how university women employees handled situations of sexual harassment and the extent to which they were satisfied with the outcome of the their efforts to deal with the situation. The relationship between the perceived seriousness of the harassment and the kinds of actions taken is also examined.

Method

Questionnaire items concerning experiences with sexual harassment were developed as part of a larger survey designed to assess the status of women employees at a mid-sized public Midwestern university. The survey was conducted to collect information from women employees which would be helpful in university planning and in addressing women's concerns. Information

was collected via an anonymous mail questionnaire in the spring of 1988. Postcards indicating that the individual had returned the survey or that they did not wish to participate were returned to a separate university office from that which received the questionnaires. This method allowed for follow-up to non-respondents without linking identifying information to the actual survey responses. Follow-up reminders and a second copy of the questionnaire were sent to non-respondents.

The section of the survey addressing sexual harassment consisted of ten closed-ended, Likert-type items with one open-ended item to allow for any additional comments. The survey items were derived from a variety of sources, including questionnaires on similar topics conducted at other institutions. Many of the harassment items were derived from the University of Pennsylvania's Harassment Survey (1984). Items were revised and edited for clarity of wording and appropriateness to the institution.

All female employees (both full-time and part-time) were surveyed. The questionnaire asked the women to indicate whether they had experienced each of seven unwanted verbal or physical behaviors of a sexual nature during the previous two years of employment at the university. The women were then asked to indicate the most serious incident, if any, and how bothered they felt by the incident. Items also asked about any actions the women took in dealing with the situation, and the reasons for their action. The women were also asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome.

Sample

Data was available from a total of 802 women faculty, administrators, and classified employees (Table 1). The response rate was 72.5% for the women faculty, 75.3% for the women administrators, and 56.3% for classified women employees. Women in secretarial/technical positions returned the survey at a much higher (67.4%) rate than women in custodial/food service positions (18.0%); thus the results of the survey described below do not accurately represent the

experiences of classified women employed in custodial or food service positions. It seems likely that the response rate was higher for secretarial and technical area employees because it was more convenient and routine for such employees to deal with paperwork.

Most of the sample self-identified as non-minority (89.8%), reflecting the composition of the work force at this institution. Over half of the women in each employment category were aged 45 years or less; however the faculty women were somewhat older and the administrative women somewhat younger in age distribution (χ^2=18.02, df=6, p<.01). The women had been employed at the institution an average of 8.95 years. Most respondents (81.9%) held full-time permanent positions.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

	Number of Respondents	Response Rate	Percent Nonminority	Percent 45 years of age or less	Mean Years Employed
Faculty	148	72.5%	94.5%	60.7%	8.66
Administrative	162	75.3%	86.6%	75.3%	7.33
Classified	492	56.3%	89.5%	67.0%	9.57
Total	802	62.0%	89.8%	67.6%	8.95

Among the faculty women, two thirds (67.1%) held a rank of assistant professor or lower. Most (67.8%) of the women faculty were employed in tenured or tenure-track positions. Of those employed in such positions, over half (55.1%) were untenured at the time of the study. These characteristics reflected the status of the women in the faculty work force at this institution.

Results

The women were asked how frequently in the last two years they had experienced specific unwanted behaviors which could constitute sexual harassment. Table 2 summarizes the results. Unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions of a sexual nature and unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures were the most frequently occurring forms of harassment for women

in each employment category. In the last two years at this university only 35.8% of the faculty women and 46.6% of the women administrators had never experienced any of the behaviors listed. Experiences of unwanted harassing behaviors were reported somewhat less frequently by the classified women employees with the majority of these women (67.1%) reported that they had not been subjected to any of the behaviors listed over the last two years. These findings are similar to those of Fitzgerald et al. (1988) who also found a higher proportion of women administrators reporting experiencing behaviors which can constitute harassment than either faculty or staff women.

There were some differences among the groups of women as to the kinds of incidents they reported experiencing. Faculty and administrative women reported experiencing unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks or questions of a sexual nature more frequently than classified women employees (χ^2=33.04, df=2, p<.0001). In addition, administrative women reported more experiences of unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures, unwanted pressure for dates, and unwanted pressure for sexual favors than either faculty or classified women employees (χ^2=14.22, df=2, p<.001; χ^2=13.97, df=2, p<.001; χ^2=8.45, df=2, p<.05). Differences in the average ages of the women and the settings in which they worked may have contributed to these differences in the frequency with which specific unwanted behaviors were reported.

Because individuals may experience several forms of harassment, respondents were asked to indicate the behavior which constituted the single most serious incident. Two hundred seventy-one women responded to this question. The most serious incident (see Table 2) for the largest proportion of women was verbal harassment (56.1%), followed by unwanted touching (15.5%). As was noted above, verbal harassment was also the most frequently reported behavior overall.

Women were asked a series of further questions about the incident which they perceived to be the most serious. In almost all of the cases, the women reported that the harasser was a male (96.9%). The frequency with which the women reported that the harasser was a superior,

Table 2: Incidents Reported

		All Incidents[a]				Most Serious Incident			
		Faculty	Admin	Classified	Total	Faculty	Admin	Classified	Total
Maximum Number Responding[b]		143	161	470	774	61	77	132	270
Unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks or questions of a sexual nature	N[c]	60 / 143	80 / 161	125 / 470	265 / 774	40	49	63	152
	%	42.0%	49.7%	26.5%	34.2%	65.6%	63.6%	47.7%	56.3%
Unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures	N	30 / 140	45 / 160	70 / 468	145 / 768	5	4	18	27
	%	21.4%	28.0%	14.9%	18.9%	8.2%	5.2%	13.6%	10.0%
Unwanted deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering or pinching	N	18 / 138	31 / 160	61 / 468	110 / 766	7	9	27	43
	%	13.0%	19.4%	13.0%	14.4%	11.5%	11.7%	20.5%	15.9%
Unwanted letters or phone calls of a sexual nature	N	13 / 139	15 / 158	29 / 470	57 / 767	7	6	14	27
	%	9.4%	9.5%	6.2%	7.4%	11.5%	7.8%	10.6%	10.0%
Unwanted pressure for dates	N	4 / 138	19 / 159	22 / 468	45 / 765	0	4	6	10
	%	2.9%	11.9%	4.7%	5.9%	0.0%	5.2%	4.5%	3.7%
Unwanted pressure for sexual favors	N	3 / 139	10 / 159	9 / 469	22 / 767	1	4	2	7
	%	2.2%	6.3%	1.9%	2.9%	1.6%	5.2%	1.5%	2.6%
Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault	N	1 / 138	1 / 159	4 / 469	6 / 766	1	1	2	4
	%	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%	1.6%	1.3%	1.5%	1.5%
Any of the above behaviors reported	N	70	86	155	311				
	%	49.3%	53.4%	32.9%	40.2%				
None of the above behaviors reported	N	72	75	316	463				
	%	50.7%	46.6%	67.1%	59.8%				

[a] Multiple responses can be given for "All Incidents" categories.
[b] Actual number responding varies slightly with each individual item.
[c] Number of responses followed by total number responding to that item.

peer or colleague, or subordinate varied with their employment type. For faculty women, the individual was most often a peer or colleague (55.7%) reflecting the relatively flat nature of hierarchies within academic departments. Administrative women were as likely to report that the individual was a superior (41.1%) as a peer or colleague (42.5%), reflecting these women's generally mid-level positions. Classified women employees most frequently reported that the individual was a superior (57.3%), reflecting their typically subordinate positions in the organizational structure.

Almost all of the women (95.9%) were bothered by the most serious incident to some extent, with a quarter of the women (25.7%) "very" bothered by the incident (Table 3). Although over half of the women (54.1%) were 'somewhat" or "very" bothered by unwanted teasing, remarks or comments of a sexual nature and unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures (55.6%), these were lower proportions than for the other categories of unwanted behaviors (78.0%; χ^2=16.04, df=5, p<.01).

While 63.1% of the women were "not at all" concerned with reprisals, 36.9% did have some concern (Table 3). A larger proportion of those who experienced unwanted pressure for sexual favors or actual or attempted assault (54.5%) were concerned with reprisals than women who experienced the other categories of behaviors (16.6%; χ^2=12.70, df=5, p<.05).

A similar proportion (64.6%) of the women did not think that their most serious incident interfered with their academic or professional performance (Table 3). Unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions of a sexual nature interfered with the work of a smaller proportion of the women (8.2%) than did unwanted calls or letters (28.6%), or unwanted pressure for sexual favors or actual or attempted assault (54.5%; χ^2=26.79, df=5, p<.0001).

As might be expected, a higher proportion of the women who reported being harassed by a superior indicated that the incident "very much" interfered with their work (9.6%) than did those women who were harassed by a subordinate (0.0%) or peer (0.9%; χ^2=14.18, df=6, p<.05).

Table 3: Reactions to the Most Serious Incident

	Not at All	Slightly	Somewhat	Very Much
How bothered were you by this most serious incident?	12 4.1%	104 35.1%	104 35.1%	76 25.7%
Were you concerned about possible reprisals?	186 63.1%	57 19.3%	31 10.5%	21 7.1%
To what extent did the experience interfere with your academic or professional performance?	190 64.6%	66 22.4%	24 8.2%	14 4.8%

Women were also significantly more likely to report that they were "very much" concerned about the possibility of reprisals when the harasser was a superior (13.6%) than when the individual was either a peer (1.9%) or subordinate (3.8%; χ^2=21.05, df=6, p<.01). This is consistent with other research (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982; Maihoff & Forrest, 1983), which indicates that harassment is perceived to be more serious and have more negative effects if a superior is involved.

When asked how they responded to their most serious incident (Table 4), most women indicated that they attempted to ignore the incident (64.4%). Other frequently used strategies included avoiding contact with the person (31.9%), and confronting the individual (23.4%). Most women tried to deal with the situation without involving the university. Only 11.5% reported that they had discussed the situation informally with a university official and 0.7% reported that they had lodged a formal complaint. These strategies are similar to those most frequently reported in other studies. For example, for students, avoidance is one of the most common strategies used to deal with experiences of sexual harassment (Benson & Thomson, 1982).

Table 4: Responses to the Most Serious Incident[a]

	Number	Percent[b] of Cases
Ignored the attention	190	64.4%
Avoided contact with the person	94	31.9%
Confronted the person who bothered me	69	23.4%
Talked to a University official informally	34	11.5%
Went along with the attention	6	2.0%
Lodged a formal complaint with the University	2	0.7%

[a] Multiple responses were possible.
[b] Total number of cases was 295.

Women who were "very" bothered by the incident were more likely to report using an active strategy such as confronting the harasser (χ^2=8.73, df=3, p<.05) or making an informal complaint (χ^2=36.79, df=3, p<.0001). Those women who were "slightly" or "not at all" bothered used these two strategies to a lesser extent. In addition women who reported being bothered by the incident were more likely to avoid the harasser (χ^2=11.53, df=3, p<.01). Women who reported feeling only "slightly" or "not at all" bothered by the incident were more likely to ignore the behavior (χ^2=15.78, df=3, p<.01).

When asked their reasons for not making either a formal or an informal complaint (Table 5), over half of the women (56.3%) reported that they had resolved the situation themselves. Close to one third (34.3%) said that they just wanted to forget about it. However, a sizable proportion (30.7%) of the women said that they felt that complaining would make the situation worse. Others felt that nothing could be done about their situation (20.5%) or were unsure if the behavior constituted harassment (21.7%).

Women who were "not at all" or only "slightly" bothered by their most serious incident were more likely to report that they had resolved the situation themselves (χ^2=9.79, df=3, p<.05). Women who were "somewhat" or "very" bothered more frequently reported that they just wanted

to forget the incident (χ^2=9.46, df=3, p<.05), that they didn't make a report because they were concerned about reprisals (χ^2=12.76, df=3, p<.01), and that they thought complaining would make the situation worse (χ^2=10.24, df=3, p<.05).

Table 5: Reasons for not Making a Formal or Informal Complaint[a]

	Number	Percent[b] of Cases
I had resolved the situation myself.	143	56.3%
I just wanted to forget about it.	87	34.3%
I thought complaining would make the situation worse.	78	30.7%
I did not know if the behavior constituted sexual harassment.	55	21.7%
I didn't think anything could be done about my situation.	52	20.5%
I didn't want to hurt the person who bothered me.	47	18.5%
I was afraid of reprisals and felt that it would be held against me if I complained.	42	16.5%
I thought it would take too much time and effort.	26	10.2%
I was afraid the University would be unreceptive.	21	8.3%
I was too embarrassed.	16	6.3%
I did not know where to report the incident.	8	3.1%

[a] Multiple responses were possible.
[b] Total number of cases was 254.

About half (57.1%) of the women were satisfied with how the situation was resolved. Women were more dissatisfied with the outcome if they reported using avoidance as one of their strategies for dealing with their most serious incident than if they did not use this strategy (χ^2=12.12, df=4, p<.05). Women who talked informally with a university official were also more likely to report dissatisfaction (30.3%) with the outcome than those who did not use this strategy (12.2%; χ^2=11.00, df=4, p<.05). This higher rate of dissatisfaction among women who talked informally with the university may reflect the fact that women generally chose to use this strategy

only if they were "very" bothered by their situation. These were likely the more serious and difficult situations.

Not surprisingly, those women who reported that they had resolved the situation were more likely to express satisfaction with the outcome than those who had not resolved the situation (Table 6). Women who reported that they thought the university would be unreceptive to their complaint or who thought that nothing could be done were more likely to report being dissatisfied with the outcome. Likewise those women who reported that they did not report their situation for fear of reprisals and those who thought that complaining would make the situation worse were also more likely to be dissatisfied with the outcome.

Table 6: Reasons for Not Making a Complaint and Satisfaction with the Outcome

		Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	
I had resolved the situation myself.	yes	77.3%	19.9%	2.8%	χ^2=57.32, df=4
	no	35.8%	38.1%	26.2%	p<.0001
I was afraid the University would be unreceptive.	yes	26.4%	26.3%	47.4%	χ^2=29.62, df=4
	no	59.3%	28.9%	11.7%	p<.0001
I didn't think anything could be done about my situation.	yes	40.4%	38.3%	21.3%	χ^2=13.62, df=4
	no	60.5%	26.8%	12.7%	p<.01
I was afraid of reprisals and felt that it would be held against me if I complained.	yes	33.3%	33.3%	33.4%	χ^2=21.39, df=4
	no	61.0%	28.0%	11.0%	p<.001
I thought complaining would make the situation worse.	yes	40.8%	36.8%	22.4%	χ^2=13.92, df=4
	no	63.3%	25.6%	11.0%	p<.01

Stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine predictors of satisfaction with the outcome of the most serious incident. The extent to which women were bothered by the incident of harassment, feared retaliation, and felt that the incident interfered with their work were significant predictors (Multiple R=.56, p<0.0001) of the extent of their satisfaction with the outcome of the situation.

Discussion

This study documented the incidence of forms of sexual harassment among university women employees at one mid-sized university. Incidence rates (ranging from 33% to 53%) were similar to those reported by researchers at other universities (39%; Goodwin, Roscoe, Rose, & Repp, 1989) and in general work force studies (42%; Stone, 1990). In this study, the most common behaviors reported were unwanted teasing, jokes, remarks or questions of a sexual nature. Reflecting the organizational setting, women in classified positions were most often harassed by a superior, administrative women were as likely to be harassed by a peer or colleague as by a superior, while faculty women were most likely to report being harassed by a peer. Women who were harassed by a superior were more concerned about the possibility of reprisals and were more likely to indicate that the incident interfered with their work. These results are consistent with the view that harassment is often based on power differentials and that the harassment is perceived to be more serious when the difference in organizational power between the harasser and victim is greater (Benson & Thomson, 1982; MacKinnon, 1979).

Gruber (1989) has categorized responses to sexual harassment into four major types: avoidance, defusion, negotiation, and confrontation. The data reported here address at least some aspects of each of his categories. Common strategies used by all three groups of women in dealing with these situations were to ignore the behavior, to avoid the individual, and to confront the individual. Very few women reported making formal complaints. The patterns of actions by these academic women were similar to those found by other researchers in the non-academic workplace. Generally, researchers find that the most common responses are to ignore the behavior and to avoid the individual (Gruber & Bjorn, 1986; Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982). This suggests that institutions which rely solely on formal reporting mechanisms in addressing this issue will be seriously underestimating their incidence rates.

Many researchers (Riger, 1991; Markunas & Joyce-Brady, 1987) have suggested that women may be less likely to report sexual harassment through established channel because of their relative lack of power within the organization. This lack of power is reflected in a concern with retaliation. This data provides some support for this view. Few women used either formal or informal reporting mechanisms and their reasons for not doing so included concern that reporting would make the situation worse. However, it is also important to recognize that in those instances in which the women were less bothered by the incident, no reports were made because the women reported that they had resolved the situation themselves.

Women who dealt with the incident of unwanted behavior by avoiding the individual or by speaking informally with a university official were less satisfied with the outcome than women who did not use these approaches. However, this relative lack of satisfaction may in part be mediated by the fact that women who used such strategies were typically more bothered by the particular incident. As Brooks & Perot (1991) found, perceived offensiveness was related to actually reporting an incident. It appears that as the situation is perceived to be more serious, women move beyond simply ignoring the behavior to taking some active steps, whether by actively attempting to avoid the individual or by making an informal complaint within the system.

The relative dissatisfaction of women who dealt with the situation by avoiding the individual involved contrasts with some of the findings for students. Allen & Okawa's (1987) reported that students at a large university who used avoidance to deal with occurrences of sexual harassment by faculty were satisfied with the outcome. Benson & Thomson (1982) found that women students who were able to avoid harassing instructors did not suffer the lose of academic self-esteem which was found in cases where such avoidance was not possible. The differences in the settings likely account for these different results. Undergraduate students, especially at large universities, may have little trouble avoiding a particular instructor. In contrast, in work settings,

much more effort may be required to avoid a particular colleague or supervisor on a continuing basis.

As institutions deal with this pervasive problem, it is important to understand how women actually deal with the situations of unwanted sexually-related behaviors which they experience as employees of the university. In this study, satisfaction with the outcome was related to the perceived seriousness of the incident. To the extent that women were less bothered by the situation, did not fear retaliation, and did not perceive that the incident interfered with their work, they were more satisfied with the outcome. This suggests that institutions need to focus particular attention on meeting the needs of women who are in situations where they fear retaliation. Safe, confidential reporting mechanisms need to be in place and well-publicized within the institution. Williams, Lam, & Shively (1992) report some evidence that the institution of university policy and educational efforts can lead to decreased levels of student sexual harassment by faculty as indicated in responses to phone surveys concerning experiences of sexual harassment by undergraduates.

Since women were more likely to speak informally with a university official if they were very bothered by their most serious incident and since a higher proportion of women who did speak with a university official were dissatisfied with the outcome, the importance of good training in handling such complaints is clear. It is important that institutions recognize that complaints are likely to be discussed informally at several levels within the institution. Well-designed educational programs aimed at supervisors, chairs, and others in a position to receive such complaints may be helpful in allowing them to deal with informal complaints of sexual harassment in a more satisfactory manner.

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